



Department of Justice

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DEPUTY CHIEF OF FIRE DEPARTMENT INDICTED IN FEDERAL COURT FOR EMBEZZLING FUNDS

Montgomery, Alabama - Angelia Curran, Deputy Chief of the Friendship Volunteer Fire Department and resident of Smiths Station, Alabama, was arraigned today in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Alabama on federal charges arising out of her embezzlement of federal funds, United States Attorney George L. Beck, Jr., announced today.

A federal grand jury returned an indictment against Curran on June 30, 2011. The indictment alleges that Curran was an agent of the Friendship Volunteer Fire Department ("FVFD") and that she submitted grant applications to the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") pursuant to FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program and FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters - Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Programs in 2005, 2006, and 2008. The grant applications requested funds to purchase, among other things, personal protective equipment for FVFD personnel, items for general fire prevention/awareness for children, and Automated External Defibrillators. According to the indictment, the FEMA grant applications were accepted and FEMA awarded the Friendship Volunteer Fire Department over \$295,000.00 in grant funds. The indictment alleges that between March 2006 and January 2010, Curran embezzled and intentionally misapplied more than \$15,000.00 of the FEMA grant funds.

The indictment charges Curran with three counts of theft concerning programs receiving federal funds, which is a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 666. Title 18, United States Code, Section 666, makes it a federal offense for anyone, being an agent of an organization, or of a State, local, or Indian tribal government, or any agency thereof, to embezzle, steal, obtain by fraud, or otherwise without authority knowingly convert to the use of any person other than the rightful owner or intentionally misapply, property that (i) is valued at \$5,000 or more, and (ii) is owned by, or is under the care, custody, or control of such organization, government, or agency when that organization, government, or agency receives, in any one year period, benefits in excess of \$10,000 under a Federal program involving a grant, contract, subsidy, loan, guarantee, insurance, or other form of Federal assistance.

If convicted of the offenses charged in the indictment, Curran would face a maximum sentence of ten years in prison for each count charged in the indictment, a \$250,000.00 fine for each count charged in the indictment, and up to three years of supervised release following her release from prison for each count charged in the indictment. Curran also would be ordered to pay restitution to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

This morning, Curran appeared before Chief United States Magistrate Judge Susan Russ Walker for her initial appearance and arraignment. Curran pleaded not guilty to the charges in the indictment and was released on a \$25,000.00 unsecured bond. Curran's case is set for trial on October 24, 2011, in Opelika, Alabama, before Chief United States District Judge W. Keith Watkins.

"We hope this indictment sends a strong message that public officials who defraud the government and steal from taxpayers will be brought to justice," said United States Attorney Beck.

"We all suffer when federal programs are undermined by fraud," said James E. Ward, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General. "This indictment should send a clear message that we intend to stop these types of fraudulent practices."

The public is reminded that the indictment contains only charges. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case was investigated jointly by the United States Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General and the Lee County Sheriff's Office. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jerusha T. Adams.